

Appendix B

THE GUIDELINES FOR COVERAGE OF DOD COMBAT OPERATIONS

DOD MEDIA GUIDELINES

The DoD Media Guidelines, issued as Change 3 to DoD Directive 5122.5, provide the following guidelines for coverage of DoD combat operations:

- A. Open and independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations.
- B. Pools are not to serve as the standard means of covering U.S. military operations. But pools may sometimes provide the only feasible means of early access to a military operation. Pools should be as large as possible and disbanded at the earliest opportunity--within 24 to 36 hours when possible. The arrival of early access pools will not cancel the principle of independent coverage for journalists already in the area.
- C. Even under conditions of open coverage, pools may be appropriate for specific events, such as those at extremely remote locations or where space is limited.
- D. Journalists in a combat zone will be credentialed by the U.S. military and will be required to abide by a clear set of military security ground rules that protect U.S. forces and their operations. Violation of the ground rules can result in suspension of credentials and expulsion from the combat zone of the journalists involved. News organizations will make their best efforts to assign experienced journalists to combat operations and then make them familiar with U.S. military operations.
- E. Journalists will be provided access to all major military units. Special operations restriction may limit access in some cases.
- F. Military public affairs officers should act as liaisons but should not interfere with the reporting process.
- G. Under conditions of open coverage, field commanders will permit journalists to ride on military vehicles and aircraft whenever feasible. The military will be responsible for the transportation of pools.
- H. Consistent with its capabilities, the military will supply PAOs with facilities to enable timely, secure compatible transmission of pool material and will make these facilities available whenever possible for filing independent coverage. In cases when government facilities are unavailable, journalists will, as always, file by any other means available. The military will not ban communications systems operated by news media organizations, but electromagnetic operational security in battlefield situations may require limited restrictions on the use of such systems.
- I. These principles will apply as well to the operations of the standing DoD National Media Pool system.